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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION REPORT		
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7. SOURCE: 13AF DI	14. APPROVING AUTHORITY: <i>Robert L. Tyrell</i> ROBERT L. TYRELL Colonel, USAF Air Attache	
15. SUMMARY: (C) This Information Report quotes a 7/13AF Director of Intelligence message dealing with the subject of unidentified flying objects. The message was dated 11 December 1968 and was in response to inquiries to that headquarters from subordinate units. It is quoted in its entirety to show the rationale used to draw the conclusions that are made. This IR is submitted in response to and partially answers SICR U-UPF-21321. Collection action continues.		(Leave Blank)
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aircraft lights or other sightings were seen. Crew of Knife 27 suspected aircraft escaped radar below radar horizon. B. On 020326L Dec, GCA radar detected 2-3 NM south of Udon RTAFB moving at same speed as Knife 27, same speed chopper, at 1000 ft. Knife 28 dispatched to area, but GCA lost Knife 28 when Knife 28 approached to within 2-3 NM. GCA later lost Knife 28 when Knife 28 descended to 1000 ft altitude. Knife 28 approached to 1000 ft altitude, then lowered searchlight, but observed nothing. Moon reportedly did not allow conditions were too dark to see well. As Knife 28 returned to base, bogie again LNM southeast of where it had disappeared, heading southeast. GCA lost it after 4-5 NM, still heading southeast in vicinity of VL 5441. Part II. On 4 December, 606 SOS advisor to Thai Border Control Police (TBCP), Region IV, reported that EPP had begun operation on 20 November between WCP and Sakhon Nakhon towns in same proximity as above sighting northwest of WCP. Four to six EPP and Royal Thai Army (RTA) helicopters were involved in this operation. In addition, EPP Region IV possesses one white heavy helicopter, which is used to monitor EPP operations. Historically, Thai pilots have been reluctant to fly at night, but the moon in recent days has made night flying almost as easy as daytime operations, and Thai pilots have been known to accomplish night flights in areas where terrain is well-known to them. As in the past, chopper operations by RTA and EPP are mostly local in nature and no flight plans are filed for resupply, placement of units, or monitoring activities unless proper pressure is brought to bear. Many EPP/RTA operations against communist terrorist are autonomous in nature, and thus centralized control is weak. As result, air defense surveillance system is often not informed of flights until later—if at all. EPP advisor is attempting to secure time so flights in support of above operation, including dates, and landing areas. Part III. Historically, November and early December have produced large numbers of radar returns, particularly on GCA scopes, from natural or cultural phenomena in THAILAND. These include temperature inversions, balloons from religious celebrations, migratory birds, and kites. In November 1961, RIAP II and DO ran experiment at Udon when GCA scopes were reported more than 10 low/slow returns in vicinity of Udon RTAFB. Group observed unusually high scores of balloons, three flocks of migratory birds, several kites, plus at least four local choppers in a span of ten minutes. At same time these sightings, even of legitimate friendly flights, failed to correlate with Brigham (Udon RTAFB-based GCI radar) and GCA returns. On numerous occasions it was established that phenomena, which U.S. personnel in GCI site would not report as authentic traffic, was reported into AOC and air defense system by Thai operators. U.S. personnel attributed these to propagation from LOS. Further investigation attributed a number of sporadic returns to over-the-horizon signals distorted by weather conditions.

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To date, there is no confirmed evidence that hostile aircraft or helicopters have penetrated Thai air space in support of insurgent or communist activities. Though it is possible that illicit friendly flights for purposes of private gain, pleasure, smuggling are being conducted, there is no evidence to substantiate this possibility at present time. It is suspected that Lao and Thai Air Force officers can and do employ RIAP and RTAF aircraft in private ventures or travel without filing proper flight plans for informing components of the air defense surveillance system. Part IV. Nature of recent reported sightings follows same pattern as "unknown returns" reported last year by Udon and Udon. In analysis of possible hostile penetration of THAILAND and in support of insurgent forces, preliminary study was conducted of technical aspects of such flights. It was found that to land in remote jungle clearings at night to airlift personnel or provide resupply was highly dangerous and improbable, especially in absence of sophisticated navigation and landing aids, and was beyond technical capability of U.S. air crews. Further, study of Air Order of Battle of nearby communist or neutral countries indicates that available helicopter strength is such that hostile or unfriendly forces do not possess adequate numbers of low/slow aircraft to undertake such missions with accompanying risk factor, when they are unable to support their own field

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ORIGINATOR OCSA, LAOS

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forces, officials, or units by air. It is not likely, therefore, that they would risk valuable aircraft and crews to support Thai insurgents, when really, infiltration, and movement by other means is cheaper, safer, and less obvious. It is interesting to note that such unknown returns have been reported since 1965 and yet no unidentified aircraft has ever crashed or been physically observed so it could be identified. Friendly suppression forces have never shot down or hit these unknown intruders, whereas U.S. helicopters and aircraft in VIETNAM and LAOS have suffered many hits and losses, and as indicated in Part I, friendly aircraft in area could not observe, even with aid of lights, any other aircraft. In past, when Royal Thai Government offered 200,000 Baht reward for shooting down of unknown aircraft and helicopters, only aircraft ever hit were BPP or RTA choppers and USAF aircraft on legitimate missions. As result, Thai Government has since withdrawn reward offer since no hostile aircraft or "unknowns" were ever downed. It is also interesting to note that in 1967 unidentified aircraft activity, purportedly in support of communist insurgents, seemed to preoccupy Thai officials until U.S. resources provided Hawk anti-aircraft missiles. Then in speech of acceptance and thanks, General PHRAPHAT, Deputy Prime Minister, said helicopter threat from outside THAILAND had ended or come under control. Part V. This headquarters is highly interested in such sightings and reports, and will continue to monitor such activity for signs of hostile intent. However, there is no evidence at present time to indicate rash of recent "Bogies" reported near NKP RTAFB involves hostile or unfriendly activity. Unquote.

2. (C) The following is quoted from a COMUSMACV message dated 17 December 1968. The message was to CINCPAC with information to 7/13AF and referenced the message quoted above. Quote. "This headquarters considers the message and excellent assessment of unidentified helicopter reports in THAILAND. This evaluation parallels our own assessments." Unquote.

3. (C) The most recent reported sightings occurred in South LAOS. On the night of 14, 15 and 16 December 1968, an unidentified high wing single engine aircraft was observed over Ban Thatong (1526N-10622E), LAOS. On two occasions it was reported circling at low altitude (400 feet). On the third occasion, it was observed at 6000 feet heading west. Estimated speed 100 knots. It has not been determined if the aircraft was an unreported friendly or enemy.

COMMENTS: (C) AIRA concurs with the comments and assessments made and with the conclusion which are drawn. It seems highly unlikely the enemy would take the risks involved to infiltrate personnel or supplies when, as is pointed out, other methods are cheaper, safer and less obvious. Some of the "unknowns" have been reported far enough into THAILAND that large helicopters would have to be used or refuelings made by small helicopters. In order to reach some of these locations, long flights would have to be made over friendly territory, both in LAOS and THAILAND. Again this seems rather unlikely and has not been confirmed by any sightings. There are no known enemy held staging areas or bases in LAOS from which such flights could operate within reasonable range, safety and security and yet remain such a well kept secret for such a long period of time. If any of these flights are, in fact, occurring it appears much more reasonable that they might be unreported friendly activities.

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